

# ROBBERY

## DEFINITION

Robbery is the taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.

## TREND

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of offenses</i>	<i>Rate per 100,000 inhabitants</i>
1998	447,186	165.4
1999	409,670	150.2
Percent change	-8.4	-9.2

Nationally, the 1999 estimated robbery total of 409,670 reported offenses was the lowest since 1973 and 8 percent lower than the 1998 figure. Collectively, cities across the Nation experienced an 8-percent decline with the largest drop, 12 percent, seen in cities with populations under 10,000. Suburban counties and rural counties also registered declines in the volume of robbery at 10 percent and 7 percent, respectively. (See Table 12.)

The Nation's most populous region, the Southern region, registered 37 percent of total reported robberies, the highest percentage among regions. The Western region accounted for 22 percent, the Northeastern region for 21 percent, and the Midwestern region for the remaining 20 percent. (See Table 3.) In comparing the 1998 figures with those for 1999, the number of robberies reported in all four regions decreased. Volumes fell 12 percent in the West, 8 percent in both the Northeast and the Midwest, and 7 percent in the South.

Five- and 10-year trends in the Nation's robbery volume indicate a 29-percent fall from the 1995 level and a 36-percent drop from the 1990 volume. Robbery rates for 1995-1999, which appear along with robbery volumes in Figure 2.8 for the same years, steadily declined as well.

Distribution figures for robbery volume indicate that the most offenses occurred in December and the fewest occurred in February.

Table 2.19

Robbery by Month					
Percent distribution, 1995-1999					
Month	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
January	8.6	9.2	9.2	9.5	9.0
February	7.3	8.0	7.6	7.5	7.2
March	8.0	8.1	7.9	8.0	7.6
April	7.5	7.5	7.6	7.6	7.7
May	7.8	7.9	8.2	7.9	8.1
June	8.0	7.9	8.0	7.7	8.0
July	8.5	8.5	8.6	8.5	8.7
August	8.9	8.6	8.8	8.7	8.8
September	8.5	8.2	8.5	8.5	8.2
October	9.3	8.6	8.8	9.0	8.8
November	8.7	8.4	8.2	8.3	8.6
December	8.9	9.1	8.6	8.8	9.3

Rate

Nationally, there were 150 robberies for every 100,000 persons in 1999, a rate that was 9 percent lower than the rate for 1998. Metropolitan areas recorded a robbery rate of 180 per 100,000 inhabitants; cities outside metropolitan areas, 59; and rural areas, 17. The Nation's cities collectively experienced 220 robberies per 100,000 inhabitants, with cities of 1 million and over reporting 477 robberies per 100,000 inhabitants, the highest rate among the population groups. The robbery rates per 100,000 persons in

suburban and rural counties were 67 and 15, respectively. (See Table 16.)

Regionally, the highest robbery rate was noted by the Northeast at 170 per 100,000 population. Rates recorded for other regions for 1999 include the South with a rate of 156, the West with a rate of 146, and the Midwest with a rate of 129. In comparing the 1999 robbery rates per 100,000 inhabitants with the 1998 figures, all regions showed declines: 13 percent in the West, 9 percent in the Midwest, and 8 percent in both the Northeast and the South. (See Table 4.)

Nature

In 1999, over \$463 million were lost as the result of robbery offenses committed. The average dollar loss, \$1,131, reflects a 15-percent increase from the 1998 figure. In 1999, the average dollar loss ranged from \$620 taken during robberies of convenience stores to \$4,552 per bank robbery. (See Table 23.) Despite the fact that the motive behind robbery is to obtain money or property, the nature of this crime involves force or the threat of force according to the Uniform Crime Reporting definition. Though monetary loss cannot possibly be equated with the serious personal injury often suffered by robbery victims, it does offer a means by which to measure the impact of this violent crime.

All types of robbery decreased in 1999 when compared with the 1998 figures. Declines ranged from 5 percent for convenience store and residential robberies to 11 percent for those committed at gas or service stations. (See Table 23.) Of the total robbery types reported in 1999, those that occurred on streets and highways accounted for 48 percent; commercial and financial establishments, 24 percent; and residences, 12 percent. Miscellaneous types of robberies accounted for the remainder.

Strong-arm tactics were used in 42 percent of all robberies in 1999. Firearms were used in 40 percent, other dangerous weapons in 10 percent, and knives or

Table 2.20

Robbery					
Percent distribution by region, 1999					
Type	United States Total	North-eastern States	Mid-western States	Southern States	Western States
Total <sup>1</sup>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Street/highway	48.3	62.7	58.1	39.8	44.1
Commercial house	13.6	9.0	10.3	14.5	16.9
Gas or service station	2.2	1.4	2.8	2.3	2.3
Convenience store	6.0	4.1	3.6	8.6	5.6
Residence	12.2	11.6	9.1	16.4	9.2
Bank	2.0	1.3	1.6	1.5	3.0
Miscellaneous	15.8	9.9	14.5	16.8	19.0

<sup>1</sup> Because of rounding, the percentages may not add to total.

Table 2.21

**Robbery**

Percent distribution by population group, 1999

Type	Group I (52 cities, 250,000 and over; population 40,081,000)	Group II (116 cities, 100,000 to 249,999; population 16,813,000)	Group III (259 cities, 50,000 to 99,999; population 17,732,000)	Group IV (452 cities, 25,000 to 49,999; population 15,808,000)	Group V (1,032 cities, 10,000 to 24,999; population 16,271,000)	Group VI (3,987 cities, under 10,000; population 13,382,000)	County agencies (2,095 agencies; population 55,106,000)
Total <sup>1</sup>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Street/highway	57.0	46.3	42.9	33.8	28.8	26.9	30.6
Commercial house	11.4	15.7	16.4	16.1	16.4	15.2	17.0
Gas or service station	1.4	2.4	2.7	3.7	3.9	3.6	3.7
Convenience store	4.0	6.7	7.1	8.7	10.0	11.3	10.7
Residence	11.9	11.5	10.8	11.0	12.6	12.9	16.3
Bank	1.4	2.1	2.7	3.6	3.7	3.2	2.4
Miscellaneous	13.0	15.3	17.4	23.2	24.6	26.9	19.3

<sup>1</sup> Because of rounding, the percentages may not add to total.

cutting instruments in 8 percent. When comparing the 1999 figures against those for 1998, the use of weapons declined in all four weapon categories: strong-arm tactics, 9 percent; both firearms and knives and cutting instruments, 8 percent; and other dangerous weapons, 7 percent. A state-by-state breakdown of weapons used in robberies in 1999 is shown in Table 21.

**Law Enforcement Response**

The national clearance rate for robbery in 1999 was 29 percent. Law enforcement agencies in rural counties reported the highest robbery clearance rate, 39 percent, and suburban county law enforcement agencies recorded 31 percent. The Nation's cities collectively had a robbery

clearance rate of 28 percent, with law enforcement agencies in cities under 10,000 in population having the highest clearance rate among city types, 37 percent. (See Table 25.)

Regional robbery clearances were 31 percent in the Northeast, 29 percent in the South, 27 percent in the West, and 26 percent in the Midwest. (See Table 26.)

Juvenile offenders (those under the age of 18) were involved in 15 percent of all robbery clearances in 1999. By community type, this age group accounted for 16 percent of the robbery clearances in suburban counties, 15 percent in the Nation's cities overall, and 10 percent in rural counties. The greatest percentage of juvenile involvement for robbery occurred in cities with populations of 25,000 to 49,999, where juveniles accounted for 19 percent of robbery clearances. (See Table 28.)

Robbery arrests for 1999 were down 9 percent from the previous year's totals. Arrests of persons in the juvenile and adult age groups fell 14 percent and 8 percent, respectively. Rural counties registered a 15-percent decline in the number of arrests for robbery, and suburban counties recorded an 11-percent decrease. Collectively, cities reported a 9-percent decrease. By gender, male arrests declined 9 percent, and female arrests dropped 10 percent. Five- and 10-year trends indicate a 25-percent decrease in robbery arrests when 1999 figures are compared with robbery arrest figures for both 1995 and 1990.

Of those arrested for robbery in 1999, 62 percent were under 25 years of age. By gender, males accounted for 90 percent of arrestees. By race, blacks comprised 54 percent of robbery arrestees, whites for 44 percent, and all other races for the remainder.

Table 2.22

**Robbery, Types of Weapons Used**

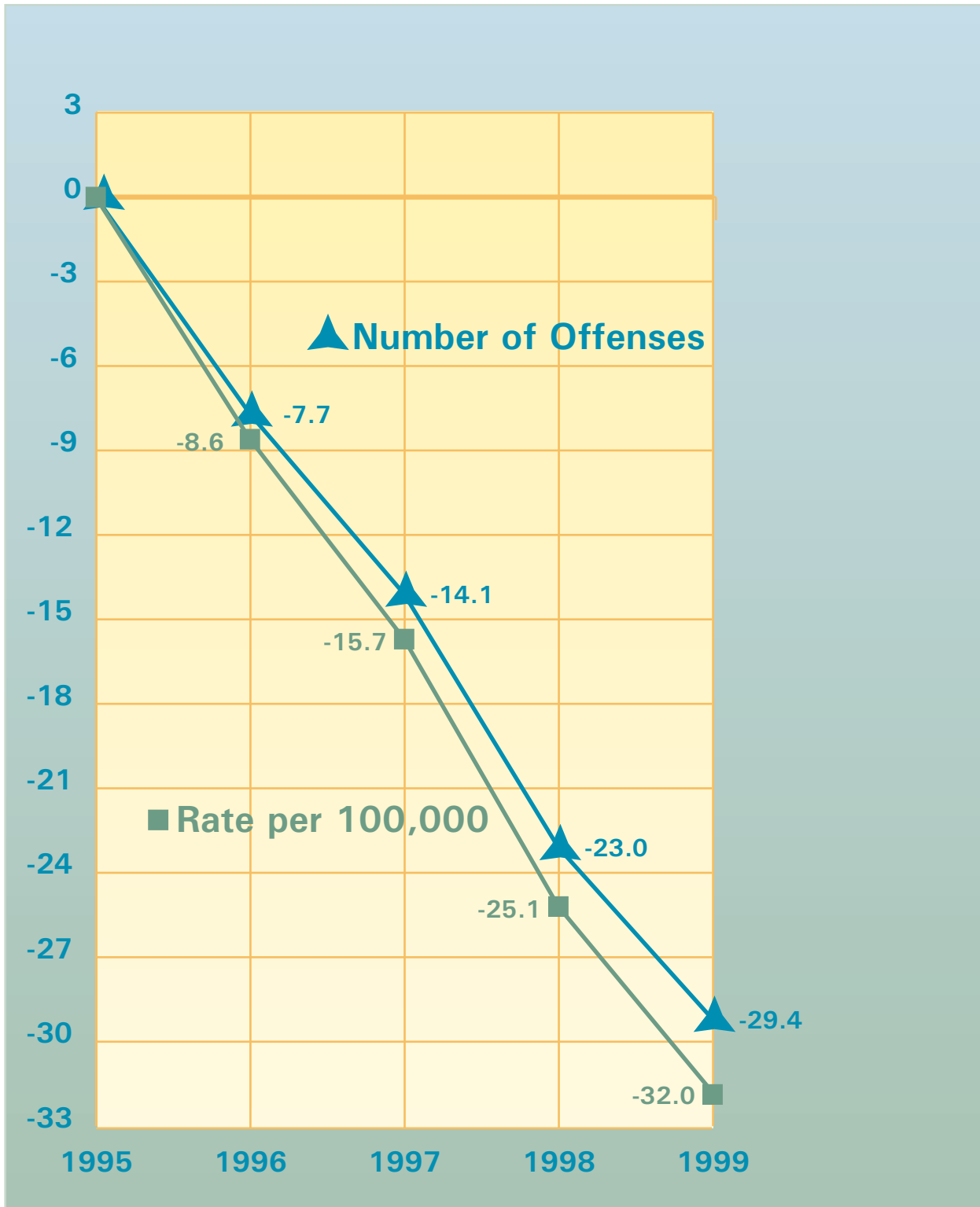
Percent distribution by region, 1999

Region	Total all weapons <sup>1</sup>	Armed			
		Firearms	Knives or cutting instru- ments	Other weapons	Strong- arm
Total	100.0	39.9	8.4	9.9	41.8
Northeastern States	100.0	33.9	9.8	7.9	48.4
Midwestern States	100.0	43.2	6.4	11.2	39.3
Southern States	100.0	45.0	7.5	10.1	37.4
Western States	100.0	34.0	10.1	10.1	45.8

<sup>1</sup> Because of rounding, percentages may not add to total.

## Figure 2.9

**Robbery**  
Percent Change  
from 1995



# Figure 2.10

## Robbery Categories Percent Change from 1995

